

---

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<http://books.google.com>



WIDENER LIBRARY



HX 3110 P

WIDI

US  
21987  
15.17

HX

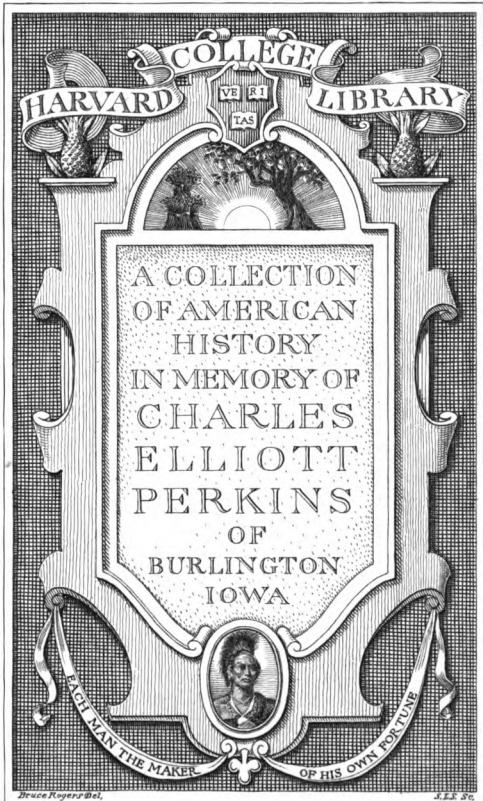


WIDENER LIBRARY



HX 311D P

US 21987. 15. 17







# Obituary Addresses

ON THE

OCCASIONS OF THE DEATH

OF THE

## Hon. JOHN A. QUITMAN,

OF MISSISSIPPI,

AND OF THE

## Hon. THOMAS L. HARRIS,

OF ILLINOIS,

*Delivered in the Senate of the United States,*

*On the 5th and 17th of January, 1859.*

---

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN MURPHY & Co.

1859.

Ms 21987.15.19

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

JUN 30 1915

CHARLES ELLIOTT PERKINS  
MEMORIAL COLLECTION

## Obituary Addresses.

U.S. - 35<sup>th</sup> Cong. 2d Session -

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

Wednesday, January 5, 1859.

MR. DAVIS, of Mississippi, rose and addressed the Senate as follows:

*Mr. President:*—The message which has just been received, sadly recalls to our consideration the loss which not only Congress, but the whole country has sustained, in the death of the Hon. JOHN A. QUITMAN—justly described in the resolutions which have been read. During the last session, as a member of the House of Representatives, he was associated with us in the labors of legislation. Much experience in official stations had set upon his brow the crown of wisdom and of public confidence, and his services were becoming, with each revolving year, more valuable to his country. He yet retained enough of physical and intellectual vigor to give promise that his life would be long and his career of usefulness add much to his country's welfare. A soldier who had so often been spared amid the storms of battle, it was natural to expect would still continue to be the favorite of fortune. He was not the one we should have supposed in the midst of common danger would have been selected by the hand of death for its victim. Yet the tide of time, returning hoarse, bears as a wreck on its relentless wave all that was mortal of the hero and statesman. It is not my purpose to attempt, in the language of eulogy, to describe the character or narrate the services of the deceased, but briefly, very briefly, to refer to some of the events of his life which connect themselves with the history of the country, and serve to illustrate some of the blessings of the institutions under which we live.

JOHN A. QUITMAN was born in the State of New York, in the year 1799. Carefully educated by a pious father, he was taught especially languages to fit him for the holy ministry, but his taste as he grew up led him to seek a more active field. He emigrated to Ohio, and was

there admitted to the bar. After a brief residence, about two years, he went on to the State of Mississippi, settled at Natchez in 1822, and there commenced his career as a lawyer. The energy, the activity, the love of popular esteem which constantly pressed him on to vigorous exertion, brought fame and wealth in their train ; brought more than these—the tribute of approbation from his fellow-citizens, and the love of his neighbors throughout his long and eventful life.

My acquaintance with him commenced a short time after his arrival in Mississippi, and I then realized what so many have felt at subsequent periods—the power he had to attach the young to him. I was a school-boy ; we read Spanish together ; and he impressed me by that peculiar trait in his character which endeared him to youth, and which caused so many manly cheeks to be wet with tears when his death was announced in that country where he was best known.

His career in the profession of the law was one of rapid advancement. He was not only among the first in his profession at the bar where he practised, but he was soon elevated by the popular judgment to the post of chancellor. He mingled with the arduous labors of the law the pursuits and the cares of a planter. He also, prompted by that patriotism which turned him aside from his own avocations to those of general importance, engaged in the public affairs of the State ; was a member of the Legislature in both its branches ; presiding officer, at one time, of the Senate, and the Governor of our State ; thus having, as it were, completed the circle both of political and of legal positions within the limits of the State of which he was a citizen. We thus see a Northern youth, thrown off into the extreme portion of the Union from that in which he was born, associated with men not only strangers to him, but without any knowledge of his family, raising him step by step, because of the merit and patriotism which he exhibited to all the distinctions which it was in their power to confer—a beautiful tribute to the fraternity which binds the American people together, and to the Constitution, which gives equality of privilege and immunity to the citizen of each State who may choose to reside in another. His last political office was that of a member of Congress. It was in that position that he became associated with us here. He was always active, always laborious. He addressed himself to the useful labors of the body of which he was a member. He sought not to render himself conspicuous by frequently appearing in debate, nor by delivering studied orations ; but he addressed himself to the useful labors of the committee-room and the current business of the House of which he was a member.

From my intercourse with members of the House, of which he was a member, I feel that I hazard little in saying that he has left behind him the respect even of his political opponents. That all who knew

him well, marked in his death the loss of a faithful public servant. Earnest, he pursued his duties with undiminished exertion, though his health was impaired and life was steadily waning away; and thus he continued to devote himself to the constant labors of his position, until at the close of the last session: he left the seat of government in enfeebled health, returned to his home, and there, in the midst of his family, he died, as a ship that has ridden out many a storm, and at last goes down in the calm of a summer sea. Thus he passed away from earth to eternity, and left a reputation which all who value integrity, patriotism, and usefulness, will not fail to hold up to the rising generation as an object for their emulation.

His taste led him very early to pay attention to Military affairs, and connected him with the militia of the State of Mississippi. He was the captain of a company which has maintained its organization down to the present day, and its name still continues in the town of his former residence. He was a general of the militia, and took such special interest in all that advanced it that he is considered, and I think justly, as the father of the present militia system of our State. When the war with Mexico began, the same tendency to military affairs which he had exhibited on another sphere, led him to offer his services to the Government. He was appointed a general of volunteers, and joined the army of General Taylor, who, with that discriminating judgment which exhibited itself upon so many occasions, selected him from among those who were at headquarters at Camargo, as one who should accompany the advance column to Monterey. In the siege and storming of that place he was conspicuous, and exhibited, as on after occasions, the martial spirit and aptitude for military affairs of which his previous career gave promise.

Not the least interesting characteristic of the American people is the capacity which has been, in so many instances, manifested to pass from one pursuit to another, so that a single individual treads all the paths of human distinction. The deceased was lawyer, planter, statesman, soldier, and prominently successful in each.

After the siege and capitulation of Monterey, and when, by the decision of our General Government, the plan of campaign was changed, so instead of advancing directly from that point into Mexico, the port of Vera Cruz was adopted as the base of operations, and the main force sent thither: General QUITMAN was transferred from the command of Gen. Taylor and passed to that of Gen. Scott. Thus he served in the campaign of the valley of Mexico, gathering distinction as wide as his employment was various. In one expedition he commanded the whole of the land forces. He at last arrived at the city of Mexico, and there established the high military reputation which will descend as a rich inheritance to his family. It was his good fortune to be distin-

guished in various battles before the city. It was his special fortune to lead the column which first entered the capital and receive the surrender of the citadel of the place.

Peace, with its blessings, being restored to our country, he not being a soldier by profession, returned to his former pursuits, and thus remained until he became a member of Congress, and served with us at the other end of the capitol.

In youth and in age he bore a love of representative liberty, which developed itself in various forms. It was this which led him, when Texans were struggling to achieve their independence, to go with a company and unite his fortunes with theirs in the darkest hour of their revolutionary trials. His career there was not eventful, circumstances having thrown him out of co-operation with that army which fought the main battle and achieved the independence of Texas. It is an instance, however, of his readiness to sacrifice his own ease and interest for a cause which he believed to demand his exertions; and thus, I think, his services have been gratefully remembered by the people of Texas.

In after years, when we believed, and had reason to believe, that a people oppressed by despotism were struggling to be free in Cuba, he connected himself with movements which were designed to aid them in their effort. He has himself explained, far better than I could, his views in relation to such conduct, by the able speech which he made in the House of Representatives on the neutrality laws. To those who may not agree with him in his conclusions, to those who may dissent from him in the opinions which he entertained, and upon which, to some extent he acted, I have only to say that to us, at least, it is a sufficient apology that whatever error existed arose from an excess of that love for representative liberty which the American education strongly inculcates. We have been reared from our infancy to turn to the names of De Kalb and Kosciusko, and Pulaski and La Fayette, with grateful veneration—men who left their country to join our fathers when they bore the name of rebels, and whose swords were weighed in the balance when their fate and our inheritance was decided. I have said it was not my purpose to speak in the language of eulogium, or attempt to give a history of the deceased; and with this brief allusion to that which may be in some minds the subject of criticism, I leave the subject.

In politics he belonged to what is known as the State-rights strict-construction school. He followed it in the various phases and names which it has borne. Mr. Calhoun was the light and guide of his youth; and when he occupied a seat in the House of Representatives he endeavored—I leave others to say if he did not successfully endeavor—to follow in the path of that great political luminary. I will not, upon an occasion like this, attempt to defend—of course it is not expected

that I should attempt to justify—the creed which he entertained and which is also my own; I allude to it because it is part of the public history of the deceased, as a logical deduction from the character ascribed to him. Suffice it to say, that he was of those who believed that all power emanated from and permanently resided in the people; who held that government existed alone by the consent of those over whom it was established; that compacts for the delegation of functions must be rigidly construed to entitle them to popular respect; and that within this limit a people who enter into an obligation are bound to adhere to it to the last jot and tittle. Out of these elements was wrought the political creed which he always avowed, and which I have ascribed to him.

Duty to his country marked his career both military and civil. Duty! The word which in the American as in the English character, always occupies the first position in the history of those who have most honored their country. We are not a people captivated by splendor, whom the mantle of glory dazzles so as to blind us to the obligations imposed upon States and individuals, and even covers failure of duty. Ours, I trust, is long to remain a Government of justice, and a people among whom success cannot redeem crime, from whom even a General who would violate the constitution under which he held his commission could not receive an ovation, though he brought with him, from a triumphant campaign, the representatives of twenty conquered provinces. Duty! the great watchword of an American statesman, the regard for which is the first prerequisite of those who hold official trusts under our form of government, whether their functions be legislative, judicial, or executive. In this devotion to duty, as I have before suggested, he passed the last days of his life and fell a victim to it: sadly impressing us with the fact that

“The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

Faithful to his country, endeared to his friends, respected by his neighbors; language fails me to express the tender and exemplary relation which he bore to his family. He closed a long life of public usefulness, having impressed upon those who knew him best the conviction that every day made him but more and more necessary, not to his family only, but to his country also. His mission was closed, and life's fitful fever was ended on the 17th of July, 1858. He died leaving behind him that good name without which “glory is but a tavern song.”

**MR. SHIELDS:**

*Mr. President* :—Before a vote is taken on these resolutions, I wish to make a few remarks as a tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased. I regret that it is not in my power, on this occasion, to do full justice to the character of one of the truest friends and bravest soldiers with whom it has been my lot to be associated in life. It was my good fortune to be closely and intimately connected with General QUITMAN in Mexico. In some of our campaigns in that country we happened to be thrown together in many a scene of more than ordinary suffering and peril. This connexion engendered a strong personal attachment between us, which strengthened into a feeling of brotherly affection before the close of the war—a feeling that continued without interruption until the last moment of his existence.

The deceased was endowed by nature with all those solid, sterling qualities, which render a man loved and respected in private life or in public station. He was an affectionate father, a kind neighbor, and an upright citizen. He was simple, courteous, and dignified in his deportment, scrupulously honorable in his dealings with others, and firm, inflexible, and fearless in the performance of whatever in his conscience he believed to be his duty. In word and deed his bearing and conduct on all occasions, and under all circumstances, were such that no man ever approached him without becoming impressed with the inherent manliness and exalted heroism of his whole character.

I have listened with interest to the able, eloquent, and truthful remarks of the Senator from Mississippi. He has spoken feelingly and forcibly of the character and services of his deceased colleague. He served with him in Mexico, and fought by his side at Monterey. The eulogy which he has this day pronounced upon his courage and conduct on that occasion is the testimony of a gallant soldier, who shared with him in the perils and glories of that memorable siege. I can say nothing in this connexion but what would likely to impair the effect of what has been so well stated already; so I will pass to other scenes with which I happened to be more familiar, and in which our deceased friend performed a prominent part.

The siege Vera Cruz is one of the most remarkable of the kind in our military annals. Like the battle of New Orleans, it presents an instance of a magnificent result achieved with inconsiderable loss. At that siege, although the perils were not extremely imminent, the services required and performed were, in general, of the highest importance. During the investment and bombardment of the city, General QUITMAN performed the duty allotted him with so much zeal and activity, that he won for himself a high reputation in the army for vigilance, sagacity, and indomitable energy. After the fall of Vera Cruz, the American

army took up its line of march for the capital of Mexico. Owing to accidental circumstances, and greatly to his own regret, the deceased was prevented from participating in the first engagements that took place on that line. But, notwithstanding this, his soldierly conduct upon all occasions was so conspicuous that he continued from day to day to augment the reputation he had previously achieved at Monterey and Vera Cruz.

But, Mr. President, it was in the last engagements in the valley of Mexico—those brilliant exploits that crowned a succession of glorious victories—that General QUITMAN exhibited that energy and efficiency which established his reputation in the army as an accomplished soldier and an able and successful commander. On the morning of the 13th of September, 1847, the division then under his command received orders to unite in a general attack upon the castle of Chapultepec. The moment the word was given the troops dashed across the plain that stretched between the main road and the castle, carried a few batteries which they found in their route, forced their way up the side of the steep hill on which that ancient fortress stands, in the face of a destructive fire, and united on the summit with the division under the gallant Pillow, in a combined attack upon the castle. The attack was as successful as it was bold and impetuous. Chapultepec fell; and the fall of that fortress placed the military key to the city of Mexico in the hands of the Americans. This was our morning's work—a work admirably conceived by the Commander-in-Chief, and splendidly executed by the troops appointed in the service.

Early in the afternoon of the same day the troops of the same division attacked and pursued a large force of the enemy along the aqueduct on one of the main roads to Mexico, drove them headlong through the Gareta Belen, assaulted and carried that Gareta at the point of the bayonet, in the face of a murderous fire of grape and musketry; and having driven the enemy from the batteries that commanded the entrance, threw themselves down upon ground moist with their own blood and the blood of the enemy, and slept upon their arms the following night within the walls of the city they had just captured with such unparalleled intrepidity; and throughout that whole day General QUITMAN was to be constantly seen at the head of his command, in the midst of the fire, animating his troops, directing their movements, and infusing his own daring spirit into his battalions.

Mr. President, in referring to these exciting scenes, there are memories of the past—strange memories—that crowd upon my mind and threaten to overpower my feelings. How can I ever forget the noble friend who came to the poor, shattered hut in which I lay wounded, at Cerro Gordo, to bid me, as he then supposed, a last farewell; and who, taking my hand in his, said, in accents trembling with emotion: "My

dear friend, if we never meet again in this life, I will take good care that full justice shall be done to your reputation?" The man who did this had a soldier's heart. Or can I forget the night that followed the capture of the city of Mexico, when the same kind friend, though exhausted and worn out with the fatigues of the day, came once more to my bedside, where I was suffering from a second wound, and watched over my troubled sleep with as much affectionate solicitude as if I had been his own son? Acts of kindness such as these, I can never forget until my own heart fails to beat; and, if I thought it necessary, I would make the same pledge to his memory, here in the Senate, which he made to me at Cerro Gordo: that, to the best of my ability, I would try to see full justice done to his reputation. But no such pledge is necessary. No American will ever be found to do injustice to the reputation of General QUITMAN. No, sir; the State in which he sleeps, the country he loved and served so well, history and posterity, will do full justice to the memory of one of America's bravest soldiers and noblest sons.

**MR. WARD:**

*Mr. President:*—I was not aware, until this moment, that the death of the lamented QUITMAN would be announced to the Senate at this time, and, consequently, am not prepared to offer such remarks on the occasion as would do full justice to the illustrious dead. But I feel that Texas is called upon to contribute her expression of regret, for the loss of a distinguished statesman and patriot of a sister State. To the immediate Representative and friend, is entrusted the eulogy in detail. I only rise, sir, in the name of Texas, as one of her Representatives, to acknowledge the gratitude so eminently due to her lamented friend and soldier; he came to her assistance in the hour of trial, and offered up his private fortune and his life in aid of an oppressed people, struggling for independence.

In the death of General QUITMAN, the country has lost a useful statesman and a bold and disinterested patriot, whose life has ever been devoted to the best interests of his country.

**MR. HOUSTON:**

*Mr. President:*—The occasion is unexpected to me. I was not aware, until the announcement was made this morning, that such a proceeding was to take place to-day. I have not been insensible to the occasion of these resolutions. I was aware of the decease of the illustrious dead, and I had offered in heart that condolence which I thought due to the event and to those who feel so deeply wounded and affected by

this death. I felt that the country had lost a patriot and soldier. I felt, too, in reminiscences of the past, that the State of which I am, in part, a representative, was sensible of obligations to the illustrious dead for evidences of patriotism and sympathy which he had evinced towards that State in her revolutionary struggle for liberty. He had made sacrifices in her behalf of personal convenience and comforts, and of pecuniary aid.

So soon as a knowledge of the struggle in which Texas was engaged reached the ears of Gen. QUITMAN, he threw aside his family cares and domestic endearments, his business transactions, and every thing of interest, and repaired to Texas to participate in her trials. He reached there at an important crisis, but, detained by orders of the vigilance committee at Nacogdoches, he was unable to engage in the conflict that was decisive of her liberty. He arrived two days after the action that sealed her existence as a nation; and I well recollect his patriotic expressions on that occasion, his ardent feelings, his indescribable regrets that he had not been there to mingle in the conflict. I well remember the respect with which Texas was inspired for the man. Ere his advent into that country he had been known to the citizens of Texas, and they hailed his arrival with the greatest enthusiasm and pleasure. So deeply were they impressed with the importance of his services as a man and an officer that the commander-in-chief tendered to him the situation of adjutant general of the State if he chose to remain; but the attractions that had drawn him there had ceased; the occasion that he had sought to anticipate had passed by; the charms which had brought him to that place existed no longer. It was thought that the great struggle of the revolution was over, and that no other occasion would present itself requiring his aid and services. Hence he declined that situation and returned to his own State of Mississippi. His illustrious services since then have been so well described by the Senator from that State and by the gentleman from Minnesota, who were associated with him in arms, that I should think it an unnecessary consumption of time to attempt any allusion to those services. As a man Gen. QUITMAN was every inch a man; as a soldier he was every inch a soldier; as a citizen he was most amiable in all his relations; as a parent he was tender, affectionate, and gentle; as a man, in his moral and social relations, he was honest and above all unworthiness of heart or action.

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

Monday, January 17, 1859.

MR. DOUGLAS:

*Mr. President:*—For the first time during my public service, it becomes my mournful duty to join in an official tribute of respect and veneration to the memory of a deceased colleague from my own State. The message from the House of Representatives has announced to the Senate the death of THOMAS L. HARRIS, a well-known Representative from the State of Illinois. His declining health—the result of severe exposure in the military service of his country—had long since impressed upon his family and immediate friends the stern necessity of preparing their minds and hearts for this afflicting bereavement. With a constitution broken, and sinking, slowly but certainly, under an incurable disease, and while calmly awaiting a result which he was conscious was inevitable and rapidly approaching, he retained and displayed the indomitable energy, courage, and fortitude which had characterized his whole life, and enabled him, until the hour of his death, to perform his whole duty to his family and to society, to his State and to the Union. He died at his home in Petersburg, Menard county, Illinois, on the 24th of November last, of pulmonary consumption. The history of THOMAS L. HARRIS may be studied and his example followed with safety and honor by the youth of our country. Born in Norwich, Connecticut, on the 29th of October, 1816, he was only two years of age when his father died, leaving him and a younger brother dependent on a widowed mother for support. By his own exertions, with the labor of his own hands, he obtained the means to acquire an education, and graduated with credit at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, in 1841. During his senior year in college he became a student at law in the office of Governor Toucey, now Secretary of the Navy, and pursued his studies with assiduity and success. In December, 1841, he removed to Amherst county, Virginia, where he continued the law, while teaching school to obtain the means of support. In 1842 he was admitted to the bar in Virginia, and the same year he removed to Petersburg, Menard county, Illinois, where he commenced the practice of his profession, and resided until the period of his death. He rose rapidly in his profession, and had already acquired an enviable reputation as a lawyer when the Mexican war broke out and called him to another field of duty. In May, 1846, he raised a company of volunteers and was elected their captain. He joined the fourth regiment of Illinois volunteers, under the command of Colonel Baker; and on the 4th of July of that year was elected major of the regiment. After reaching Mexico the absence and sickness of the colonel and lieutenant colonel devolved the command of the regiment upon Major HARRIS; and in this position he displayed, in an eminent degree, the qualities of the soldier and the officer—courage, energy, promptitude, and discipline. He soon became conspicuous, winning the applause of his superiors and the confidence and

love of those under his command. At Vera Cruz, as well as Cerro Gordo, after the fall of General Shields, when the command of the brigade devolved upon Colonel Baker, and that of the regiment upon Major HARRIS, in consequence of the sickness of the lieutenant colonel, the gallantry of my friend became historical, as appears by the official despatches of General Scott, commanding in chief, and those of Major General Patterson and Colonel Baker, under whose immediate orders he acted.

During his absence in Mexico, Major HARRIS was elected by the people to the Senate of Illinois, notwithstanding the district had previously given a decided majority in opposition to the political party to which he belonged. Returning from the war, surrounded with honors which his fellow-citizens all took pride in awarding to him, and which he bore with a modesty in harmony with his character, he again engaged in the practice of his profession with that earnestness of character which was a part of his nature. But he had become an object of too much public interest to be allowed to remain long in private life. In 1848 he became the nominee of the Democratic party (with which he was always thoroughly identified) for Congress, in a district which had uniformly given a decided opposition majority, and was triumphantly elected, upon the distinct issue of non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States or Territories. His course in Congress was bold, manly, and unequivocal; always adhering strictly to the principles on which he was elected. He supported, by vote and speech, the legislation of 1850, known as the compromise measures; and never failed to defend the authors of those measures and the principles involved in them, whenever and wherever assailed.

In 1854, when sectional strife raged with its greatest fury, and men of less nerve quailed before the storm, Major HARRIS again became the candidate of his party for Congress in his district, which had been changed so as to conform to the new apportionment, and was then represented by a political opponent. In this contest he stood forth the bold and fearless champion of the principles embodied in the Kansas-Nebraska act; and in that distinct issue he was elected by about two hundred majority over his popular antagonist. Maintaining in Congress, with ability and fidelity, the principles on which he was elected, he for the third time became the chosen leader of his party, by a unanimous vote, in 1856; and, after an arduous and severe canvass, pending the Presidential election of that year, he was re-elected by about two thousand majority. The course which Major HARRIS felt it his duty to pursue on the important and exciting questions which engrossed the attention of Congress during the last session, is familiar to the Senate and the country. Whatever diversity of opinion may exist, here or elsewhere, in regard to the merits of that controversy, all will unite in bearing testimony to the ability, fidelity, and gallantry with which he maintained and defended his conscientious convictions.

When Congress adjourned he returned to his home in the beloved State of his adoption, worn down and exhausted by excessive labors, and sinking slowly under the effects of a disease which even his energy and will could no longer resist. He received the unanimous nomination of the Democratic party for re-election to congress, and was re-elected on the 2d of last November by about four thousand majority. Con-

trary to the advice of his physician, and in opposition to the urgent and affectionate remonstrances of his friends, he insisted upon being carried to the polls, that he might pay the last tribute to his political faith and perform his last duty to his country. He lived to receive complete returns of the election in the entire State, and to write affectionate letters of congratulation to those with whom he had uniformly acted on public questions, and in whose success he cherished a deep and heartfelt interest. While the country at large will mourn the loss of a brave and true man, whose patriotic services in the field and in the councils of the nation gave promise of a brilliant and useful future, we of Illinois, who knew him best in all the relations of life, can alone fully appreciate the extent of our loss.

Major HARRIS left a wife and four small children, to whom he was tenderly, ardently, devotedly attached. Of them, their affliction, their loss, I will not attempt to speak. God alone can pour consolation into their hearts.

#### MR. SHIELDS:

*Mr. President:*—In rising to second the resolutions, I beg leave to add a few words to the remarks of the honorable Senator from Illinois. After the eloquent and appropriate observations of that Senator, to which we have just listened, it only remains for me to touch briefly upon some incidents in the life of the late THOMAS L. HARRIS, which occurred, as it were, under my personal observation. I was a citizen of Illinois when the deceased became a resident of that State in 1842. He was a member of the legal profession, and as such, soon succeeded in establishing in his new home, an enviable reputation at the bar for diligence, probity, and ability. He was a man of clear intellect, cool courage, and a high sense of honor. In the practice of his profession, in the legislation of his State, on the battle-fields of Mexico, or in the hall of the House of Representatives of the United States, whenever or wherever duty summoned him to act, he obeyed the summons in the spirit of an honest, gallant, high-souled man—a man true to his duty, his conscience, and his country.

In the spring of 1846, the State of Illinois raised and equipped four gallant regiments of volunteers to serve in the war with Mexico. THOMAS L. HARRIS received the appointment of major in one of those regiments—a regiment which formed a part of the first brigade, which I had the honor to command. In the summer of that year we sailed for Mexico, and landed at Brazos de Santiago. Upon our arrival in that country, to our great regret we found it necessary to encamp for a time on the lower Rio Grande to await our supplies. Placed in a low, unhealthy region of country, this temporary camp proved extremely disastrous to our unacclimated troops. Disease and death invaded our ranks, and made sad havoc among our raw levies. The sound of the muffled drum, the requiem of some lost companion, was the doleful music that day by day assailed our ears and smote upon our hearts. It was during this trying period that THOMAS L. HARRIS exhibited those qualities of gentleness and humanity that always accompany true courage in a refined and noble nature. He forgot himself in his devo-

tion to others. Day and night he traversed the camp, from tent to tent, cheering, encouraging, and consoling his suffering companions. It was in the discharge of these humane duties, at that time and place, that he contracted the seeds of that disease which undermined his health and strength, and pursued him down to an untimely grave. Upon the arrival of our supplies we were able to ascend the river and select a more healthy position ; and here I was appointed to another command, which separated me, for a time, from that brigade. Early in the spring of 1847 we came together again at the siege of Vera Cruz. During the pendency of that siege the deceased acquitted himself with conspicuous courage and gallantry. He commanded a select detachment from the brigade in a general attack upon the enemy's outposts, and performed the service with resolution, sagacity, and intrepidity.

Late in the evening of the 17th of April, of the same year, our brigade of New York and Illinois volunteers halted at the foot of Cerro Gordo, to be ready to take an early part in the expected engagement of the next day. On the ground near where we happened to halt lay three pieces of artillery—a twenty-four pounder and two twenty-four pound howitzers—which the engineers had brought there in the hope of having them placed in battery on the summit of an adjoining hill, to be ready to open upon one of the enemy's batteries next morning. Night had fallen before the attempt could be made ; and the darkness of the night, and the precipitous nature of the ascent, made them begin to think of abandoning the undertaking as hopeless and impossible. But the volunteers were not accustomed to consider any thing impossible that had been positively ordered to be done. They manifested the utmost anxiety to try their strength on the twenty-four pounder ; and as it could do no harm to gratify their wishes, I detailed five hundred men, under the command of Major HARRIS, to make the experiment. The experiment was made ; and, to the astonishment of us all, proved completely successful. In the darkness of night that huge cannon was hauled up a rugged acclivity, the very sight of which might have deterred them from even making the attempt had they been only able to see it in the full light of day. This little battery of three pieces of artillery did effective service in the battle next morning. Our historians make mention of this as a remarkable feat, and tell us it was performed the night before the battle ; but, in justice to the memory of the dead, I take this occasion to tell the Senate and the country by whom it was performed.

Early on the morning of the 18th our brigade received orders to advance across rugged, broken pedrigal, attack the reserve of the Mexican army under the immediate command of Santa Anna, and seize the Jalapa road, in order to cut off his retreat to the capital. This movement was executed with rapidity and success. The attack was so sudden and unexpected that Santa Anna had barely time to effect his escape by flying into the adjoining woods, leaving his carriage, baggage, money, and plate in the hands of the volunteers. The surprise was so complete that the whole medical staff of the Mexican army were surrounded and captured in their hospitals before they had the slightest suspicion that our troops were in that vicinity. Throughout this sharp and spirited engagement there was no officer or soldier of that brigade

who exhibited more dauntless courage and brilliant intrepidity than the gallant man whose untimely loss we this day deplore.

Mr. President, I considered it due to our past relations to refer to these incidents of his life, because they happen to be within my own knowledge. It was like a debt due to the memory of a deceased friend, which the occasion called upon me to discharge. It was a sacred offering which I deemed it my duty to depose upon the tomb of a deceased companion; and, having performed this sad but sincere and earnest duty, I cannot think it necessary to refer to his public services as a statesman. These are part of the history of the country. They have been handsomely alluded to by his distinguished colleague, the Senator from Illinois. It is sufficient to say that the deceased brought to the conduct of public affairs, on all occasions, the same resolute and noble spirit which he was accustomed to exhibit in the suffering camp or on the field of battle. May his spirit rest in peace!

**MR. DAVIS:**

*Mr. President:*—It is the custom of our body, upon the announcement of the death of one of our brethren, either of this chamber or of the other, that the fact should be noticed not merely by those who belong to the same geographical section, or who hold very near political or personal relations to the deceased, but that it should also be responded to by those who occupied other relations. It is a usage worthy to be preserved. It speaks to the heart and to the mind of that which makes us really one people—fraternity. It speaks also to history of that which I trust is long to remain, such good understanding among members of congress as secures the co-operation of men from every portion of our wide expanded country, for the one great object—the common good of the whole. It belongs, also, to the civilization of the age, that while we raise the little heap over the remains of the departed, we should smooth every trace of controversy which has existed in life, and leave the grave to bear only the flowers of affection and the cypress of sorrow.

But mine, sir, is not the performance of merely a formal task. I come bringing the heart's offering. Such is my contribution to the pile which affection and justice are rearing to the memory of the deceased.

Each revolving year but impresses me more and more with the sense of obligation for benefits received, and the inadequacy of the return I have been able to make to my fellow-men for the kindness which they have bestowed. To the deceased I am indebted for services which friendship only gives—a friendship which I had no right to claim or even to expect from him; services rendered on more than one occasion, and rendered too when it was least likely I should ever know it. It is with me a matter of deep regret that I never sufficiently manifested to him the gratitude which I felt and feel. Language would fail me if I were to attempt to express all that I believe to be a just tribute to his memory. My heart feels what my tongue cannot express. If it be permitted to friends in the land of the departed to note the acts of those they have left behind, I trust the cordial tribute which I offer to his memory will not be unwelcome to his spirit.

Truly has our path of late been strewn with monitors of the vanity of life's toils and troubles. One after another, in quick succession, we have been called upon to mourn the loss of those who have been connected with us in the labors of legislation ; and as we look back on the vacated seats of even the most distinguished, are we not solemnly warned how ephemeral are all our efforts, how vain are the cares which engross the mind, and the midnight toil with which we weave that web which the next breeze may bear away forever ? Empty must seem the struggle to blow the little bubbles which the next wave of the tide of time will bear to oblivion. The Senator from Illinois has well described how his exposure in the camp and his toil in the council hastened his death. In this earnest and excited labor he is but another instance of the many which surround us how far ambition, even leading to misplaced exertions, robs youth of its spring time, and hastens us on prematurely to the languid step, the hollow cheek, the dimmed eye, which wintry age alone should bring. Around us, Senators, are strewn the wrecks which such an encounter with the storms of life has daily made. Around us they stand as monitors to the living ; and though silently yet forcibly do they appeal for that tribute which is due to the dead who died by the public service, and claim the offering which patriotism brings when it approaches the altar where man has sacrificed himself to his country.

The deceased, both in peace and war, showed that he realized that obligation of the citizen of a Republic which denies that he shall consider himself as living for his family only. True to his friends in private life ; true to his country in official position ; true to himself, may we not venture to hope that he has gone to his God to receive the reward which justice gives to truth and manly virtue ? Studious and conscientious, he was remarkable for the accuracy of his knowledge, and this gave to him especial value in council. Long will he be remembered by those who went to him as a sort of walking lexicon of current events, and often must he be missed by them when they require his aid in consultation. Others may look upon his career as fulfilling the measure of his mission ; but his personal friends must still deplore his early loss, their sorrow can find no healing balm. The winter of life has no returning spring ; the flowers wither and fade, never to bloom again. The muffled drum has beaten the last march of the soldier ; the lamp of the statesman is extinguished forever. It but remains, then, for the tear of affection to water his grave ; for the prayer of patriotism to follow the spirit of the departed, and give that which patriotism claims for the man who lived for his country and died as became its citizen.





This book should be returned to  
the Library on or before the last date  
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred  
by retaining it beyond the specified  
time.

Please return promptly.

